

## The legacy of state socialism as a challenge to systemic transformation: Poland in comparative perspective

Adamski, Wladyslaw

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**THE LEGACY OF STATE SOCIALISM AS A CHALLENGE  
TO SYSTEMIC TRANSFORMATION:  
POLAND IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

**WLADYSLAW ADAMSKI**

Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung gGmbH (WZB)  
Reichpietschufer 50, D-10785 Berlin





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## 1. The dynamics of group interests and societal conflicts as a reason of state socialism collapse and its transformation

There is a growing consensus among social and political scientists that, in order to better understand the ongoing processes of market and democracy oriented transformations in post-socialist societies, we have to pay more attention to the ways people were contributing to the "unexpected collapse" of the ancient regime. If we approach the problem from this perspective then it may appear that a lot of diagnoses and interpretations, offered by the mushrooming ranks of collapsologists, would present themselves as being either inadequate or oversimplified, and as such they deserve to be seriously re-evaluated or even rejected as a kind of common-sense knowledge. What I have here in mind refers primarily to those methodological concepts which attempt to explain the "spectacular demise of communism", relying predominantly on the exogenous factors of system destruction, and ignoring or underestimating those indigenous ones, and among them in particular their structural and cultural specificity as a decisive force in a given case of state-socialist society crisis and its transformation. To these types of one - factor - analyses one could ascribe not only the contributions of those authors who tend to reduce the system collapse phenomenon either to the charisma of great leaders, be them Gorbachev, Walesa or even the Polish Pope, or to the conscious move of the "regional hegemony" who "purposely triggered regime crises in Eastern Europe" (Di Palma, 1993). Another instance of such an easily achieved explanations, is offered by the prominent political scientists, who approach all of East European, including the former USSR, cases of regime change - "regardless of their geopolitical location or cultural context" - as a part of the same "wave of democratization that began in 1974 in Portugal". They also assume that all of this cases should be regarded "as parts of common process of diffusion and causal interaction" (Schmitter and Karl, 1992).

What is characteristic to these methods of perceiving the processes of East European systems change is their openly declared disbelief in the role of spontaneous social actions in those processes. As emphasized by Di Palma, "it was not popular action that by some overlooked quality, caused communist collapse. It was the already deep crisis of the regimes - their loss of confidence, their manifest abdication - that opened the gates to popular actions". Following O'Donnell and Schmitter, this author also believes that, during the regime crisis and transformation period, "scholarly reliance on enduring group interests, structures, and values to predict behavior - is no longer useful".

Of course, such a research methodology could be justified on the ground of the speculative version of totalitarian and post totalitarian system approach, or in the case of ideologically - minded theories of communism or "post communism". However, they lose their cognitive potential when confronted with the wealth of empirical reality offered by historically and culturally specific traits of what is supposed to be defined as communist legacy of a given society. In order to avoid



such terminological biases, one has to either resign from such ambiguous terms as "communism" or "totalitarianism", or to follow those scholars who consequently stick to more pragmatic terms. One of most convenient might be the term "state socialism", perceived as "variations in the social structure of a society that may generate a body of political demands and political interests" (Lane, 1990). In favor of this kind of pragmatic definition are the opinions of scholars who persuasively prove that totalitarian model may be accepted only as a "typological category", fitting quite closely to the Soviet Union under Stalin rule, but later on, even in this country, "gradually losing its explanatory power" (Walicki, 1993).

My own methodological credo prompts me to believe that neither the totalitarian or quasi-totalitarian system of power as such, nor even the depth of its communist or socialist ideology implementation, but rather its inner contradictions, stemming from the historical uniqueness of the "designed" by this system social structures, deserve to be taken as decisive factor responsible for the system collapse and the trajectories of the on-going processes of the "post-societies" transformation. What is primarily unique to these state-socialists variations in the planned or designed models of their social structures should be linked with their innate propensity to generate group interests and value orientations conducive to the emergence of such a type of societal and political conflict, that has been able to challenge and destroy the system itself.

As we have realized ex post, the possibility of having such a conflict of interest in state socialism, and specifically of defining its principal actors, was hardly predictable. In Poland, since August 1980 we were given the privilege to be among the first observers or participants of such a societal conflict eruption. We were also in position to analyze and interpret systematically the mechanisms of its structuration and the stages of its further evolution. In our first attempts aimed at understanding and interpreting this conflict we were using the concepts of agency, as well as the theories of "new" social movements as a source of conceptual inspiration "(Giddens, 1984, Touraine, 1979, Tilly, 1986). Instrumental proved to be also the structurally minded theories of social conflicts and group interests (Dahrendorf, 1959, Parkin, 1976, Mills, 1951, 1967). However, it appeared soon that none of these methodological approaches was adequately tailored in order not only to envisage, but also to convincingly explain the type of agency and accompanying it societal movement of vindicative nature, or conflict of interest, we have been facing in Poland.

What sounded plausible in Touraine was his idea of "new social movements" as a kind of agency which "has no reason to be subordinated to any political, intellectual or moral forces - external to it". Less attractive was this author's assumption that "new social movements" are supposed to rely on "middle class employees and professionals rather than on the new working class". At first glance more applicable to us, but also misleading - although quite often referred to with any deeper

understanding - seemed to be Dahrendorfian concept of "industrial conflict". Its principal weakness, as evaluated from our perspective, stems from the fact that it deals with conflicts of interests organized from above rather than spontaneously articulated, and, in any case, does not envisage the option for such a conflict contribution to social change of systemic nature.

Highly instrumental in grasping the essence of Polish conflict appeared to be Charles Wright Mills' thoughts on the conditions under which industrial workers tend to become "a class - for themselves and a decisive political force". This author's analyses of American society brought him to the conclusion that both Marxian and liberal assumptions "that men, given the opportunity", will be rationalistic enough "to come to political consciousness of their interests" and "engage in class action", didn't found, however, any empirical proof (Mills, 1951). In spite of this failure, Mills was, till his last days, strongly involved in desperate search for "an historical agency and social and institutional actors of structural change". In quite apparent way inspired by student dissents and the sudden eruption of new social movements of the sixties, he was prone to see this "historical agency" in "the intelligentsia in its broadest sense" As far as workers are concerned, Mills left us with the following words, which - twenty years later, and in a quite remote historical context - sounded as a sheer prophecy. Referring to his comparative studies on working classes, which "were not completed yet", Mills expressed the opinion that "only at a certain (earlier) stages of industrialization, and in political context of autocracy do wage workers tend to become a class for themselves" (Mills, 1967)

If we agree that his prediction found its fulfillment first of all in the Polish context of state socialist society, then we have to notice that it happened contrary not only to the mainstream of well established theories of interests and agency; f. ex. Mancur Olson (1965) claimed as "logical irrationality" to expect "the emergence of any class interests consciousness and action". It happened also as something in what Mills himself was not prone to believe.

What was really hardly predictable on the basis of Western, and especially American, patterns of structural development, was the creation under state socialism of such a structural component which was primarily responsible for the emergence of specific to this system type of agency and group interests rationality. What we do know from the analyses on the dynamics of Polish conflict (Adamski et al. 1993, Rychard, 1993), says that such an agency on the group or social class level appeared primarily among the new brand of industrial workers and intelligentsia, being the main "products" and actors of the socialist industrialization.

The phenomena of the widespread diffusion of interests consciousness among basic social classes was more or less present in all East European state socialist societies. However, only in Poland it found the most fertile conditions for such interests open and spectacular manifestation. It holds true not only when we look at contentious or

rebellious type of social consciousness, but also at destructive to the system, organized forms of collective behavior. Both of these features of contentious agency have developed as the outcome of what, in this country socialist reality, was not only universal, but also what should be perceived as the result of its structural and cultural peculiarities. Crucial characteristic of this type of contentious agency was that people located in dependent social positions quite frequently gain an awareness of the fact that their interests are different from the interests of those located in power positions (Adamski, et.al. 1982; Adamski, 1985; Rychard, 1987). Although this statement might resemble the Dahrendorfian approach, it goes beyond this author's preoccupation with the fight for position of authority between "dominant" and "subjected" actors motivated by the "latent" or "manifest" interests within a given "coordinated association". What did not fit to our political context was the fact that under the Polish version of state socialism the emergence of agency and basic group interests consciousness was not aimed at the "interests of other dependent groups, competing among themselves for better access to the limited amount of distributive goods, but primarily at the very foundations of the system itself, as well as the legitimacy of its political power elites.

Among the explanatory hypotheses, I am going to verify in this paper, the crucial one refers to both the system and culture bound peculiarities of the "designed" by state socialism social structure. It says that under the Polish version of state socialism, these structural peculiarities, and especially the emergence of common interests between the "new working class" and "proletarianized intelligentsia", proved to be destructive to the socialist system in general, and specifically to the ways of its ideology implementation. It is hypothesized further that in the current stage of systemic transformation this structural legacy has been still active in challenging the neoliberal ideology as well as the strategies of its implementation applied by the new political elites.

## **2. Structural-generational premises of the emergence of system challenging interests**

It is assumed that the appearance of contentious agency, which is in position to generate a societal type of social and political conflict, has been deeply rooted not only in what may be defined as universal patterns of state socialist social structure *sensu largo*, but also in its specific for a given country demographic determinants. In the case of Poland the coincidence of these structural/demographic peculiarities has substantially contributed to the distortions in the processes of cultural transmission between generations, as well as to the emergence of a new generation, recruited from those of Poles who belonged to the first post-World War II "baby boom". Such an assumption is based on the sociological conception of "ascendant generation" which is concerned with looking for historically specific age cohorts as potential

actors of a given society cultural and structural change. Some vital encouragement in developing this conception we may receive from cultural anthropology, as well as from family and life course sociology (Mead, 1970; Elder, 1979). These disciplines seem especially convincing in linking some historically specific age cohorts of "newcomers" with a global society undergoing an accelerated process of radical technological and social transformations (Keniston, 1965; Mannheim, 1944).

Another source of inspiration came from the structurally minded research on socialization processes in post-industrial societies. What they disclose says that the level of social aspirations and ambitions of individuals tends to be "relatively independent" of the family influences (Spencer and Featherman, 1976), and also that these new aspirations are prone to behave as more and more "autonomous social force" (Chombart de Lauwe, 1975). What is important in the findings offered by these considerations is that they perceive the family socializing functions, and consequently its power of shaping new aspirations, as being strongly dependent on specific for a given "ascending generation" a historical context of its socialization and life opportunities.

The crucial question to be posed here is under what structural circumstances the new types of social aspirations, represented by a given cohorts of ascendant generation, might have a chance to reach such a level of autonomy that would allow this generation to articulate its aspirations and basic needs in terms of group interests conducive to such a conflict which is empowered to threaten the very foundations of social and political system? In looking for an answer to this question, except of such macro-determinants as the pace of modernization processes and their coincidence with the situation of economic crises or a sudden growth of the size of ascendant generation in a society, we pay a special attention to the distinctive features of a state socialist political system and the type of social structure responsible for conflicting socialization of the ascendant generations.

The latter statement encourages me to advance the hypothesis that the state socialist societies of East-Central Europe, and among them Poland in particular, under the circumstances of the clash of their indigenous cultures with imposed upon them social structures and ideologies, were creating exceptionally favorable conditions for their "ascendant generations" to become basically disassociated from the pressures exerted on them not only by the family milieu, but also by the inconsistency of state socialist ideological indoctrination (taking place on both the educational institutions and the work environment) as the most decisive socializing agency for school leavers (Adamski, 1980).

From this point of view we may distinguish at least three sets of structural determinants, shaping the generational peculiarities of the post World War II East Europeans, and mostly the Polish "baby boom" generation. What in particular deserve our closer insight is: (1) The absolute, and especially the relative size of

"newcomer cohorts" in demographic structure of a society; (2) their participation in the socialist pattern of "educational expansion" and, (3) the heightened level of their life aspirations as confronted with career opportunities offered to them by state socialism.

As proved by the demographic statistics (see table 1), since the late fifties the size of age cohorts belonging to the young generation has become much more prominent and their importance has been felt much more seriously in the eastern than in the western part of Europe. However, what really matters when the life chances for the ascendant generation are considered, is not only the absolute growth of the young age cohorts, but above all the ratio between the ascendant cohorts (15-29 years of age) and the established cohorts (30-59 years), as well as the variations in this ratio as it changes from one decade to another.

From this perspective the following tendencies deserve our attention: (1) the impact of the post World War II "rejuvenation" of European societies, as observed through the ratio of ascendant generations to stabilized or older generations in 1970, was the highest in Poland (among Eastern countries) and Holland (in Western); (2) at the same time the change in this ratio between 1970 and 1980 achieved the highest level, on the one side in France, and on the other - in Poland; (3) however, when we try to correlate both factors, i.e. the rates of absolute growth of young generations and the variations in their proportion to the older ones over time, then Poland appears as the only country which since 1970 exhibits the strongest, cumulative and long-lasting effect of the process of demographic rejuvenation.

It goes without saying that any sudden increase or fluctuation in the size of youth cohorts must exert a heavy pressure on older generations of a given society, as well as on chances for smooth or disruptive course of this society development. It is also quite obvious that this pressure should first of all effect the educational system. For the "baby boomers" of Eastern Europe it meant, above all, an increase of opportunities for secondary - general and/or vocational education to the point where it became universally accessible. Not equally impressive, but nevertheless notable progress has been made in opening the institutions of higher education, with a special preferences given to children from peasant and worker families.

Table 1. Age Cohorts of 15-29 as Related to 30-59 Years, as Compared to East and Selected West European Countries in the Post-World War II Decades\*

Country	Years	Age cohorts (in thousands)		Ratio A/B	Change in ratio over preceding decads (%)
		15-29 (A:)	30-59 (B:)		
Bulgaria	1960	1.834	3.046	0,60	
	1970	1.922	3.355	0,57	- 7,7
	1981	1.905	2.937	0,64	+ 13,0
	1990	1.873	3.557	0,53	-18,8
Czechoslovakia	1958	3.829	6.460	0,59	
	1968	2.796	5.270	0,53	-10,5
	1979	3.470	4.963	0,70	+31,9
	1990	3.421	5.264	0,65	-7,1
Hungary	1960	2.154	3.904	0,55	
	1970	2.437	3.948	0,62	+11,8
	1980	2.356	4.183	0,56	-8,8
	1991	1.816	4.184	0,43	-23,2
Poland	1960	6.442	10.510	0,61	
	1970	8.299	11.439	0,72	+18,5
	1980	9.475	12.972	0,73	+0,6
	1991	12.790	15.092	0,85	+16,0
Romania	1956	4.684	5.483	0,85	
	1969	4.512	7.671	0,59	-31,2
	1981	4.825	8.466	0,57	-3,3
	1990	5.216	8.338	0,62	+9,8
France	1960	8.859	17.101	0,52	
	1970	11.336	17.606	0,64	+24,1
	1980	12.733	19.788	0,64	0,0
	1990	12.790	21.766	0,59	-8,8
The Netherlands	1960	2.490	3.851	0,69	
	1970	3.311	4.372	0,73	+5,6
	1980	3.554	5.048	0,70	-4,0
	1991	2.893	3.691	0,78	+11,1
Sweden	1960	1.993	3.050	0,65	
	1970	1.828	2.964	0,62	-5,7
	1980	1.703	3.143	0,54	-12,1
	1990	1.779	3.002	0,52	+9,4

\* Source: UN Demographic Yearbooks

The empirical data at hand allow us to conclude that the educational opportunities opened by state socialism before the first postwar generations of Eastern Europeans have dramatically surpassed the level of the education reached by their fathers' and mothers' generations. This applies to all countries compared, except of Czechoslovakia, where significant differences between the ascendant and stabilized age cohorts appeared only on the lowest level of education. Both in Hungary and Poland this educational advancement of "baby boomers" is significant on both elementary and basic vocational levels, but in Poland only - it applies also to the level of tertiary education. Such an impressive generation gap is a historically rather unique phenomenon. And its implications for social and political system functioning deserve a more careful analysis.

One would expect that being objectively in such a privileged position, as far as the educational chances are concerned, the ascendant generations of the post World War "baby boom" in Eastern Europe would display nothing but sheer enthusiasm about what they were able to achieve. The relevant empirical evidence does not confirm such an expectation. In all the countries being compared the first baby-boom generations disclosed a remarkable gap between the level of schooling they attained and their aspirations to enhance it further. This concerns higher education above all. The desire to acquire university or equivalent credentials seemed in 1978 to be strong enough in any East European society, but it might come as a surprise that, on the one hand, these aspirations were relatively weaker in Czechoslovakia, and that on the other hand, they were unusually strong in Poland (see: table 2). Comparing the most striking aspects of educational goals in both their real and desired dimensions, we may conclude that, unlike the Czechs and Slovaks, as well as the Hungarians, whose aspirations were more or less evenly distributed, the young Polish employees belonging to the baby boom generation, with their extremely strong commitment to further education, showed a separate pattern.

Among the factors that deserve to be identified as the sources of relatively higher aspirations and also of keener disappointments, revealed in violent way in the year of 1980, by Polish industrial employees, probably the crucial one was related with the drastically limited career opportunities available to those of them who belonged to the generation of babyboomers. This applies in particular, on the one hand to those who were forced to choose the basic vocational tracks of postcompulsory education, and on the other - to those who graduated from the university level educational institutions. Poland is the best example for the statement that in the countries of Eastern Europe social structure became increasingly closed once the first phase of the socialist industrialization was completed. Indeed, a tendency is shown that social mobility have substantially decreased both in intra - and intergenerational dimensions, as is particularly clearly demonstrated in the years of 1970s and early 1980s (Bia\_ecki, 1986).

Table 2. Young Employees' Educational Attainments and Aspirations: Poland as Compared to Hungary and Czechoslovakia in 1978 (in %)

Country	Education achieved (A) and desired (B)		
	Less than secondary	Secondary	Higher
<u>Czechoslovakia</u>			
A*	70.5	24.6	4.9
B*	46.3	38.1	15.6
Ratio B/A	0.7	1.5	3.2
<u>Hungary</u>			
A*	57.4	33.5	9.0
B*	30.8	38.6	30.6
Ratio B/A	0.5	1.2	3.3
<u>Poland</u>			
A*	64.8	32.3	3.0
B*	35.3	41.2	24.5
Ratio B/A	0.5	1.3	8.1

\* A = achieved education

\*\* B = level of education desired, as measured by level of educational aspirations.

(Source: F. Gazso and V. Shubkin, 1980)

How seriously affected by these structural barriers were those educated young people from the baby boom generation, we can ascertain when looking at the results of comparative research (see: Gazso and Shubkin, 1980). The structure of work placement in four East European countries show that, except of Czechoslovakia, it was highly uncoupled with respect to the school qualifications. In contrast to their Czech and Slovak counterparts, the Poles were on the average assigned to relatively lower ranks and positions. It holds true, above all, for the graduates of secondary vocational schools. While their Czech and Slovak colleagues of this same education nearly always enjoyed the very prestigious status of "white-collar worker with professional qualifications", the majority of the Poles had good reasons to consider themselves downgraded or underemployed. The lot of graduates with basic vocational education as potential carriers of rebellious attitudes and behavior should draw our special attention. While in Czechoslovakia about 40 percent of these graduates were placed in white collar positions, in Poland almost all of them were



channeled into the ranks of blue-collar workers, thus creating an incomparably huge, separate generational stratum within the working class.

How conflict-laden this situation was in Poland in the midseventies, and specifically, how it influenced the generational relations in the workplace, one may judge on the basis of the present author research on the "two generations of industrial employees" (Adamski, 1980). When I measured the impact of education in the workplace on the level of job satisfaction, reported by the young (17-30 years), as compared to older (45 years and more) industrial employees from the same enterprises, the results were surprising. Defined by the level of work satisfaction, the gap between the younger and the older cohorts appeared to be very wide, especially on the higher rungs of the educational ladder. While the generational belongings played almost no role among employees with only primary school education, as far as job satisfaction is concerned, the different amount of education sets apart sharply those with basic vocational, secondary vocational and higher technical education.

As these data clearly prove, the general indices of job satisfaction in our sample drop drastically with increasing levels of employees' education. This negative correlation between the quantity and quality of schooling received and self-reported job satisfaction runs exactly counter to the results shown by the research done in Western societies (Luda, 1981). What is worth to emphasize in here is that Polish blue-collar workers, specially those young and skilled, on the average reported almost twice as high a level of occupational satisfaction as engineers and other college-trained professional employed at the same enterprises. The low level of job satisfaction experienced by young employees was understandable. Having been given, in many cases, as much as twice the amount of education when compared to older employees, they were at the same time both dramatically underpaid and denied the opportunity to utilize their educational qualifications as well as to have an access to the posts of authority. The young professionals with secondary school and university credentials appeared to be extremely disadvantaged financially. While doing the same work and occupying the same socio-economic positions, they were paid much less than their equals in the same field who belonged to the older generation. Their discontent was also due to the seniority and political correctness rule, keeping them aside from more challenging and especially managerial positions.

On the basis of these analyses I feel entitled to conclude that the perceptions of relative deprivation which produced in Poland, primarily in the young industrial employees, contentious attitudes and behavior was especially strong among the skilled workers and the university trained specialists. They felt cheated because the road to the satisfaction of their ambitious economic, vocational, and socio-political needs and aspirations had been mostly blocked to them. It was found, above all, in those socio-vocational groups which of necessity and not of their own choice, remained economically and socially dependent - both from their families and the

state. Such a double dependency lasted beyond the reasonable period of time. This situation has contributed to the emergence of specifically socialist phenomenon, which I once called as the "stage of extended social youth". It was extremely frustrating to those young adults who either approached or even exceeded the age bracket of 30 years. Contrary to many influential theories of conflict - breeding socialization, the attitudes of deprivation and rebelliousness revealed by the Polish "baby boomers", and among them mostly the specialists, have not manifested itself in the family and in the relations with their parents, and even not in the secondary or higher education institutions, as was the case with western dissenters. Contrary to this situation, the Polish "baby boomers" had chosen the state socialist nomenclatura class as their "enemies", and socialist workplaces as the battle-ground in their fight for both generational interests and identity.

### **3. The actors of political conflict and their structural location: continuity and change in the years 1981-1988.**

It is widely accepted that behind the Polish conflict embodied in the spontaneously emerged Solidarity movement there were not only economic demands, to be measured in distributive dimension of interest articulation, but also the claims of strictly political and systemic nature, addressed to the central power. This way of perceiving the conflict structure tends to recall the dichotomy pattern, which divides its actors into antagonistic parts, i.e. "us" (society) and "them" (people in power). However, this methodological approach appeared to be in many respects oversimplified. We can prove it when looking closer at the manifest and latent interests represented, on the one hand by the actors involved in creation and supporting of Solidarity and, on the other, by those who more or less supported the Party and the system, and who decided to keep their privileged positions due to the affiliation with the so-called Branch trade unions. Of course, such a clear-cut political and ideological dichotomy within basic social groups of state employees did not exclude their tacit cooperation, or even their participation in common protest actions. It usually happened when the economic interests of both unions were equally endangered by the government policy.

In spite of this fact that all employees of the state socialist economy, and among them also the majority of higher managers, shared some of common interests and solidarity in relation to those who monopolized the central power, in the situation of sharp economic and political crisis they tended to realize that their vital interests are opposing each other, and when it appeared that trade union affiliation is the most adequate structure for these conflicting interests articulation.

Table 3. Trade union affiliation by socio-occupational categories in 1981

Socio-occupational categories	N=100	Solidarity	Branch union	Other unions	Non-unionized
Skilled workers in heavy industry	60	86,7	3,3	6,0	10,0
Skilled workers in light industry	108	74,1	10,2	1,9	13,9
Lower level supervisors and foremen	49	73,5	14,2	2,0	10,2
Technicians	45	71,1	15,5	-	13,3
Other skilled and semi-skilled	100	69,0	15,0	1,0	15,0
Professionals*	22	68,2	4,5	4,5	22,7
Middle-level administrative staff	42	66,7	16,7	7,1	9,5
Intermediate	106	62,3	18,9	7,5	11,3
Office employees, blue/white collar	53	62,3	18,9	7,5	11,3
Unskilled and laborers	101	55,4	14,9	5,9	23,8
Workers/part-time farmers	90	53,3	11,1	3,3	32,2
Office employees	89	51,7	22,4	6,7	19,1
Higher managers	58	51,7	31,0	1,7	15,5
Teachers	40	47,5	2,5	45,0	5,0
Craftsmen	42	14,3	4,8	-	81,0
Farmers	331	12,7	1,5	0,3	85,5
Retired (except from agriculture)	329	12,5	12,7	7,9	66,9
Retired from agriculture	36	11,1	2,8	-	86,1
Not gainfully employed	57	7,0	12,3	7,0	73,7
Housewives	131	6,1	-	0,8	93,1

\* - excluding engineers and economists

The most spectacular expression of such a conflict manifestation occurred by the end of 1981, i.e. just before the imposition of martial law. When evaluated by the Solidarity as opposed to the Branch union membership, this conflict revealed a striking asymmetry between its sides (see: table 3). I was clear at first glance that Solidarity had an overwhelming majority mostly among manual workers, and first of all, among those who received their skills in vocational schools and who were relatively younger. On the average 73 per cent of employees below the age of 30 years were then Solidarity members, and they also belonged to the most militant participants in protest actions, while among employees in the older age brackets both union membership and protest activity were much lower (below 50 per cent) and more evenly distributed. Except of teachers and higher managers, those among the state employees, who after the August 1980, had chosen to stay in branch unions and not to join Solidarity, constituted no more than 10 to 20 per cent of each of the most influential social groups.

In order to properly interpret these unprecedented indices of spontaneously emerging participation in organized and contentious activity of trade-unions under state socialist system, one has to confront them with the distribution of Party membership in both Solidarity and Branch unions. We have done it with respect to two separate stages of this conflict evolution, i.e. before and after the imposition of martial law (see: table 4).

Table 4. Party membership and trade union affiliation by socio-occupational categories in 1981, 1984 and 1988 (in %)

Category	Party member	1981		1984	1988
		Solidarity	Branch union	Branch union	Branch union
Managers and specialists	yes	55	28	48	71
	no	70	15	18	26
Technicians	yes	65	27	41	57
	no	72	15	23	28
Office employees	yes	33	54	43	83
	no	61	16	25	30
Skilled workers	yes	76	20	50	72
	no	72	8	17	29
Farmers and part-time farmers	yes	16	32	42	48
	no	20	2	8	23

These comparisons allow us to disclose the following traits of this conflict structure: (1) In spite of the fact that Solidarity gained a dominant position in basic social categories, in the pro-government unions remained a considerable proportion of employees who either occupied positions of authority (as managers and administrative staff) or those who were performing ideologically bound professions, as was the case of teachers, being almost on equal parts split between Solidarity and the old Teachers Union; (2) Not only employees from different social-occupational groups, but also those declaring their Party membership appeared to be sharply divided in between the opposing trade unions.

These kind of contradictory allocation of the principal actors of conflict in the social and political structures should be accepted as a background for this conflict potential to persistently mobilize contentious group interests against the central power, and thus to decisively contribute to the aggravation of system efficacy crisis. The unusual depth of such a structural crisis should be considered as a principle reason of the system collapse. What allows us to define it as a rather unique type of structural conflict, as approached through the prism of this conflict composition, is primarily linked with the structurally based differentiation and even political polarization of the strata of intelligentsia. As proved by empirical evidence at hand this kind of conflicting divisions was most clearly identified not only among the category of specialists with university level credentials, as was the case with managers and teachers, but also among those with the secondary education diploma, as was demonstrated by the categories of lower ranks of administrative staff who preferred to protect their interests through the old union membership.

As far as political cleavages between both union in conflict are concerned, they could be also observed through their preferences to protest actions. While those managers and specialists who were affiliated with Solidarity union, tended to express their overwhelming support to strikes, those from Branch unions were rather reluctant to any approval of this form of social protest (see: table 5). Curiously enough, this pattern of political - attitudes differentiation within the stratum of intelligentsia was in power not only during the peak of Solidarity legal existence i.e. in 1980-1981, but also after this movement was crushed by the harsh measures applied against it on the ground of martial law. In 1988, when the Branch unions were able to rebuilt their monopolistic position, as the pro-government organization, the specialists who joined these union, in clear majority, were still expressing their disapproval to strikes, while these specialists and managers who stayed outside this progovernment union, i.e. mostly former Solidarity members, were declaring the opposite preference, thus replicating exactly the same pattern of protest propensity as if they still were Solidarity members.

Table 5. Approval of strikes by social position and trade union affiliation in 1981-1988 and 1990-1995 (in %)

Social categories	Year	Solidarity		Branch unions	
		Approve	Disapprove	Approve	Disapprove
Managers and specialists	1981	65	32	17	77
	1988	62*	31*	30	60
	1990	17	79	29	71
	1995	60	40	30	60
Semi-specialists and office employees	1981	72	28	42	58
	1988	41*	49*	36	52
	1990	46	48	30	65
	1995	51	36	32	67
Blue/white collar employees	1981	58	39	31	69
	1988	42*	54*	20	53
	1990	21	78	30	65
	1995	78	11	32	63
Skilled workers	1981	61	35	29	67
	1988	43*	47*	36	51
	1990	25	73	29	70
	1995	47	41	51	43
Unskilled workers	1981	40	54	18	82
	1988	30*	59*	29	55
	1990	31	66	40	53
	1995	47	47	33	59

\* Data for 1988 refer to the category of "non members of trade union", since the Solidarity union was not legalized yet.

Behind these cleavages within the strata of intelligentsia, as measured both by their trade union membership and attitudes toward strikes, one could quite easily identify, on the one side the vindictive interests and value orientations of those who were seeking either for improving of their position in access to posts of authority and related with it privileges (what pushed them to support a typical for Solidarity leaders pressure on the government, aimed at the "introduction of real reforms of the system") and on the other side, the endangered interests of those who were determined to defend their privileged position in power, or who simply were this power supporters for pragmatic or ideological reasons.

In trying to evaluate the above mentioned split in the socialist strata of Polish intelligentsia, and primarily of those of its members who were state employees in industries, we should also keep in mind the fact that, contrary to the situation in other East European societies, and the Soviet Union in particular, quite a similar, if not much serious process of political polarization was taking place among the highest ranks of Polish intellectuals. To lesser extent it applied also to the central nomenclature class, and even to the grass-root level of Party activists. The most spectacular expression of these conflict breeding cleavages among the ideological and political elites was the existence (until the introduction of martial law) of fiercely opposing each other, separate associations within the Polish Writers Union, as well as journalists association, and also the emergence of open factions and "revisionist" tendencies within the Party itself.

If we take into account the depth of the Polish intelligentsia involvement in both parts of conflict under consideration, then it would appear as a phenomenon having no comparable precedence in other East European state socialist societies. When looking for the possibility of interpreting this phenomenon, we can find it on the ground of the system contradictions theory. If the strata of intelligentsia, and intellectuals in particular, are to be treated under socialism as an elite (highly politicized), then this elite differentiation in the way revealing the symptoms of "system contradiction" may be approached, following Frank Parkin, as fundamental prerequisite of the vital disturbance in both the "stratification order" and "power equilibrium", what should be taken as conducive to the "social system transformation" (Parkin, 1976).

Except of the split of intelligentsia, another Polish peculiarity, which may be also approached as a conflict generating expression of "structural contradiction of state socialism", should be linked with the emergence in this country of what I call the "new working class". The specificity of this class found its expression in the fact that its members were able not only to gain the "rational awareness" of/and identification with "their class interests", but also were able to learn how to use the "collective political means" in order to achieve the collective political ends" in realizing their interests.

The existence of such a working class which is characterized by heightened aspirations, attitudes of autonomy, self-confidence and a sense of independence in its relations with the people of power, are the traits which could be hardly found in western societies. As proven by Kohn and Slomczynski, (1987), it was not the case of American workers as compared to their Polish counterparts. On the other side of the system borderline, such a working class had not appeared also in the Soviet Union, where the "state dependent type of worker" seemed to prevail (Zaslavsky, 1995). To the specific qualities of the Polish industrial workers, especially pronounced among the first post World War II baby boom generation, one should also add their cohesiveness and the strongest involvement in protest actions, as well

as their equalized economic and social status - when compared with the non-manual specialist at the work-place. All this has contributed to another structural peculiarity of the Polish conflict background, which resulted in the phenomenon of working class alliance with the proletarianized intelligentsia. The close cooperation of the two partners, being openly supported by the dissident intellectuals, created the strength of Solidarity as an independent institution voicing not only their own, but also most the broader social and national interests and aspirations.

It belongs to common knowledge that the imposition of martial law, aimed at accommodating the Polish conflict through the harsh legal administrative, and openly coercive actions, basically failed to achieve its goal. The rudimentary institutional forms of Solidarity existence were able to survive as an underground organization. Much more was secured, however, in the field of social consciousness, and this mostly applies to the spirit of resistance to the policy offered by those in power, what could be interpreted as the "dormant" or "hidden" stage of the same structural conflict evolution.

#### **4. Societal conflict accommodation and its enduring legacies: "winners" and "losers" or actors and clients in the process of systemic transformation**

What is the fate of the Polish conflict after the political break-through of the system in 1989? Has it totally or partially disappeared or simply changed its shape, just falling apart into broader spectrum of highly differentiated group interests or pressure groups? If we try to approach this question through the main trends of real changes, that have occurred in the inherited social structure during the initial stages of transformation processes, then the answer will be "rather yes". It means that the conflict under consideration has basically lost its system destructive potential. The most visible symptoms of this sort of social dynamics are to be related to the radical shifts in the structural location of the main actors of systemic conflict, what has primarily contributed to the dissolution of what we have called as the alliance between the new working class and this part of socialist intelligentsia which felt frustrated, because of their blocked aspirations, and specifically, because of being deprived of access to power positions and privileges attached to these positions. As I have been trying to prove earlier, this historically rather unique alliance was basically aimed against the inefficiency of the state socialist system in general, but not necessarily against its equalitarian ideology and distributive functions of the state. Such ambivalent motivations were mostly shared by the more powerful partner of the alliance i.e. the working class, while the intelligentsia was much strongly involved in the fight against the monopoly of power, performed by the nomenclature people.



In the new systemic reality, introduced as a result of the "Round Table" agreements and the first quasi-democratic parliamentary elections of 1989, the Polish conflict has entered in a visible way at its phase of an uneasy accommodation. Among the decisive factors responsible for such a breakthrough, one has to identify not only the effect of political freedom explosion, and relaxed by it processes of untempered group interests articulation and their representation through the imposition of democratic procedures. Equally, or even more important seems to be, from this point of view, the influence of liberal ideology, and in particular the abandoning of the socialist dogma of full employment policy as well as the social consequences of privatization processes, launched by the first Solidarity sponsored government, and basically continued also by the leftist coalition when it came to power after 1993 parliamentary elections.

How destructive this democracy and market-oriented reform implementation proved to be to the inherited shape of societal conflict, we can ascertain when looking at the new emerging social structure, and especially at the positions it offers to the main actors of this conflict. The most impressive outcomes of these structural "shifts" caused by the first stage of systemic transformation, seem to be those reflected through the prism of "structural winners", i.e. those who have been able to climb to the position of "business owners" or "self-employed", and on the other side, of "structural losers", i.e. those who have been downgraded to the category of more or less excluded from being permanently employed (see table 6). If we apply this way of observing the new-imposed stratification divisions, then it appears that in the time - span of 1988 - 1995 among those who had been most successfully moving upward on the new - emerging stratification or social status ladder, there are first of all representatives of business owners and self-employed in private sector before the 1989 political breakthrough, and secondly the former higher and lower managers, as well as low skilled "non-manual" employees from the socialist economy. Much less frequently among this category of the transformation beneficiaries are found both principal actors of Solidarity revolution, i.e. who were in position either of specialists not involved in the posts of authority, or the blue-collar workers.

On the other pole of this new stratificational axis we find the following "social losers: (1) those who in 1988 were out of the labor force, i.e. mostly the representatives of the younger generation, of whom almost a quarter have dropped to the new-emerged category of unemployed; (2) the representatives of the socialist working class, and among them most frequently those unskilled, of whom almost 20 percent are those who lost their jobs; (3) among those structurally excluded from permanent employment are more frequently women, than men, and it applies primarily to the categories of both former "self-employed", as well to the former blue collar workers in socialist economy.

Table 6. Social status "winners" and "losers" in the process of structural change in the years 1988-1995 (Men=804, Women = 857)\*

Social position in 1988	Gender m=men; w=women	N=100%	Moved to position of		Remained at the same position	Dropped to the category of unemployed
			Businessmen	Self employed		
Higher managers	m	45	15,6	8,9	71,1	4,4
	w	17	5,9	5,9	76,5	12,8
Lower managers	m	55	10,9	7,3	78,2	3,6
	w	56	3,6	1,8	87,5	7,2
Intelligentsia	m	18	0,0	5,6	88,9	5,6
	w	49	2,0	8,2	89,8	0,0
Other non-manual employees	m	59	6,8	10,2	74,6	8,5
	w	232	1,7	3,0	85,3	9,0
Skilled workers	m	307	1,6	6,2	80,8	11,5
	w	55	0,0	7,3	74,5	17,9
Unskilled workers	m	37	0,0	2,6	76,9	19,9
	w	70	0,0	2,8	82,9	13,9
Farmers	m	23	8,7	8,7	82,6	0,0
	w	19	5,3	0,0	94,7	0,0
Peasants	m	36	0,0	5,6	94,4	0,0
	w	52	0,0	5,8	94,2	0,0
Business owners outside agriculture	m	26	38,5	46,2	11,5	3,8
	w	5	20,0	80,0	0,0	0,0
Selfemployed not hiring employees	m	34	17,6	44,1	35,3	2,9
	w	17	0,0	11,8	64,7	22,8
Not employed (in 1988)	m	162	3,7	10,5	63,0	22,8
	w	155	0,6	5,8	67,7	25,5
Houswives	w	130	0,8	1,5	82,3	15,4

\* - computed by W. Zaborowski

These are dramatic social divisions and they have to be perceived as being mostly of durable character. They are additionally strengthened by either the income differentiation or unequal career options offered by the implementation of liberal ideology and free market-economy. Among the sources of these new structural differentiation, that are perceived as the most drastic violation of the equality of democratic principle of "equal opportunity" in entering to the new class of capitalist entrepreneurs, we can identify: (1) the possession of any kind of business before 1989; (2) the managerial position performed in 1988; (3) the employment in state or state supervised bureaucracy. Much less conducive to the position of private business owner appeared to be the former status of "deprived of power intelligentsia" as well as the socialist working class.

As a sign of sharply diverging interests between the contemporary workers and intelligentsia, as former partners in Solidarity "alliance", we have also to seriously consider the profound shifts in their social and political orientations as revealed by the indices of participation in political parties, trade-unions and other voluntary associations (see: table 7). When membership in political parties is concerned, the prevailing tendency for the period of systemic transformation is almost total withdrawal from any form of organized political participation. Except of managers at higher positions, there is none of statistically relevant ratio of party memberships among basic social categories of population. In 1995 it applied absolutely to the categories of specialists with higher education and lower level managers, as well as to selfemployed. However, in comparison to 1990 the latter category proves to be completely disinterested in political participation and similar trend we do observe among skilled workers.

In sharp contrast to these symptoms of social withdrawal from organized politics, being almost equally distributed at the very low level among basic social groups, what deserves our attention here and could be taken as the only viable form of mass participation, is this type of spontaneous or organized social and political actions that concentrates around the trade-unions. It is, however, attractive mostly to skilled workers, and those members of intelligentsia who are employed either in partly privatized, or still supervised by the government, former socialist enterprises and state run public sector, i.e. office employees, teachers, health services etc. What is relevant here is the fact that these categories of union members are split into highly politicized, each other, factions i.e. Solidarity Branch unions, and. In spite of still strong position of so much fight each other - if not on the ground of divergent interest, however, but rather on the ground of basic value orientations, as well as system change preferences both unions in the course systemic transformation they lost most of their members and supporters. The situation tends to stabilize, however, since 1990. Nevertheless in 1995, probably as a result of the leftist Party victory in parliamentary elections, the most influential groups of intelligentsia, and among them mostly managers and specialists, decided to leave the ranks of Solidarity, while at the same time there was a spectacular inflow of these categories to the Branch

unions. This shift of members in between the main unions may be taken as a further evidence of the dissolution of the Solidarity-led, workers-intelligentsia alliance. What seriously aggravates this split is the fact that, while the Branch unions become more and more strengthened by managers, the Solidarity is almost deprived of this influential category of intelligentsia.

The above presented shifts of structural character seem to confirm the thesis of the emergence of more classical patterns of class interests in the processes of transformation (Machonin, 1995). In Poland this tendency is to be observed also through the prism of value orientations which tends to be more and more closely associated with the diverging interests. The proof of this we find when looking at the attitudes towards strikes. Since 1990 (see: tab.7) they have been twice changing dramatically. For the first time it happened just a year after the first quasi-democratic election, when Solidarity firmly kept its "protective umbrella" above the first "non-communist" government (a great majority of Solidarity members were then against any form of destructive protests). And for the second time, it happened, when the Solidarity people strongly supported strikes as a weapon against the "post-communists" who returned to power after the 1993 elections.

Such a serious fluctuation in political attitudes, revealed in a short time, and its strong dependence on the particular union membership, might be interpreted as a sign of the survival of an old pattern of "us"-"them" conflict situation. But is it a conflict over diverging group interests or just an expression of non-material judgments, or moral and religious values, and some ethos's that have been subsequently nourished by the rightist politicians? On the ground of our empirical data we can confirm the existence of both tendencies. It means that the persistence of highly ideologically bound distances between the two currents of Polish trade-unions has been mostly represented by their leaders' political ambitions, while the economic interests of those at the grass-root level members, irrespectively of their union affiliation, tend quite clearly to converge. Drawing from our 1995 survey results, we are in position to claim that "the primacy of materiel interests" as a crucial prerequisite of democratic consolidation (Schopflin, 1992), has been in Poland basically achieved. In the light of these tendencies also the earlier hypothesis, assuming "the primacy of values over economic interests" at the pre-1989 period of the Polish conflict evolution, and the return to "primacy of values" in the first stage of democratic transformation (Wnuk-Lipinski, 1993), deserve to be re-evaluated and modified.

Table 7. Membership in political parties, trade-unions and voluntary associations by socio-occupational categories in 1990 and 1995 (in %)

Socio-occupational categories	Members of:								Not organized at all	
	political parties		Solidarity		Branch and other trade unions		associations		1990	1995
	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995		
Managers at high level	0,0	5,0	16,3	5,0	24,5	35,0	22,4	10,0	51,0	50,0
Managers at low level	0,0	0,0	17,4	6,8	19,8	31,8	16,1	6,8	52,9	59,1
Free professions	0,0	0,0	30,4	7,7	0,0	0,0	21,7	0,0	47,8	92,3
Specialists	2,2	0,0	17,4	10,4	34,8	37,3	4,3	11,9	45,7	46,3
Semi-specialists	0,0	1,9	18,5	10,0	13,0	14,6	3,7	8,1	61,5	69,2
Other non-manual employees	0,6	0,0	15,7	10,6	18,3	21,3	3,2	2,1	62,9	68,1
Skilled workers	1,3	0,0	25,4	19,4	23,7	20,0	3,1	6,1	48,9	56,1
Unskilled workers	0,0	2,3	21,6	15,9	12,5	11,4	2,3	1,1	62,8	70,5
Peasants	1,2	1,2	2,8	2,4	1,0	1,2	2,3	15,8	84,5	81,8
Self-employed outside agriculture	5,8	0,0	3,8	4,7	0,0	3,5	5,8	13,8	88,5	80,1
Employed in private sector:										
-managers		0,0		4,2		4,2		0,0		91,7
-non-managers	1,3	0,8	3,4	6,8	0,0	8,8	0,0	5,6	92,9	79,7
Unemployed	-	0,0	-	1,5	-	1,0	-	4,9	-	92,7
Others	3,1	0,9	4,5	2,8	6,3	2,4	5,2	5,2	80,2	89,0

There is enough evidence to support the hypothesis that both the real and endangered interests differentiation, caused by the processes of transformation as well as accompanying them value orientations, are still contributing to the persistence and survival of an old pattern of conflicting relations in the society. They find their substitutory expression in the two currents of trade-union

organizations. But is it so that this pattern of both trade unions' composition, and their affiliation either with leftist or rightist orientation is going to dominate the political scene, thus taking over the most of weak and dispersed political parties? Such a threat to both the process of democratic consolidation and further systemic transformation of economy could not be a priori excluded.

## **5. Interests in "transition" to market economy: research assumption and hypotheses**

In the following analysis and interpretation of our research findings for 1988, 1990 and 1995 we intend to focus on three phases of ownership transformation in Poland: the phase of selective contesting of the old system, the phase of opening up to market economy and the phase of selective approval of the effects of the transformation. However, we shall be concerned less with the processes underlying these structural changes and more with the "actors" of change, identified in terms of attitudes, interests and systemic preferences manifest by the individual and group participants of these processes. In other words, our main research objective is to recognize the interests and preferences which steer the actors of the transformation in the afore-mentioned phases of systemic transformation. Further analysis will try to capture the dynamics of these interests and preferences because this information may help predict the future model of ownership relations.

Our basic research hypothesis is of this part of the paper says that the course, range and permanence of the on-going ownership transformations in Poland and the accompanying adaptive-innovative strategies of individual and group behavior depend not only on the effects (past and present) of systemic interests and preferences developed in socialist days but also on the evolution of these interests and preferences under the pressure of new structural and systemic contingencies.

Seeking inspiration in our previous synthetic works (Adamski, 1985, 1989; Rychard, 1986, 1993; Wnuk-Lipinski, 1991), we assume that the interests and systemic preferences (both those inherited from socialism and those which are continually evolving in the process of transformation) which are contributing actively to the transformation processes manifest themselves particularly forcefully in the domain of ownership transformations. However, the rules according to which these interests and preferences are evolving are neither homogeneous nor internally consistent. For example the widespread unwillingness of Polish people to choose clearly between private and state ownership is accompanied by the ever-rising attractiveness of the group-ownership model. But on the other hand high and continually unsatisfied aspirations to start a business of one's own go hand in hand with a reclaiming attitude towards the state and resentments towards capitalism. Also, sudden

advancement to the business class or enthusiasm for the principles of market economy by no means exclude ideological nostalgia for egalitarian society.

Does this diversity and inconsistency of rules governing the evolution of inherited social interests and preferences during systemic transformation deserve further scrutiny because it has high potential to block further transformation or because it has potential to support transformational processes? We believe that both these potentials deserve equal treatment (and in so doing we correct somewhat the ideas inherent in Grabher and Stark's, (1997) "evolutionary theory of institutional change"). The evolutionary theory assumes that systemic transformation takes place not via rejection and destruction of old institutions but via their "mutation" alongside coexistence and competition between their old and new components. The ensuing attempt to recognize the continuity and discontinuity of "inherited forms" and new ones is also present in our concept of interests. However, as opposed to the institutional approach which has no great difficulty identifying acts of social change, attempts at empirical recognition of old and new interests in the presented surveys, and particularly attempts at tracing their dynamics, are hampered with methodological difficulties. It applies both to the ways of defining of particular phases of transformation as well as to describe and indicate the empirical methods of identification of the interests involved.

Our concept of interests tries to trace the sources of economic system change in post-socialist society to the dynamics of social structure and consciousness. According to this approach, those who investigate systemic change should neither predefine the target economic system (as is sometimes the case with neo-liberal economists) nor try to evaluate its implementation against any ready-made model of transition to market economy. This approach focuses the researcher's attention on the differentia specifica of the social structure of state socialism, i.e., on the fact that in this structure, private ownership was non-existent in the economy and even if some significant relicts of such ownership survived, as they did in Poland, they were strictly controlled by the state. If we take this peculiar feature into consideration we will be able to detect certain forms of articulation of group interests which were specific for the socialist system and also to pay attention to the fact that these interests may have led to the collapse of the system from which they emerged and even affected the development of the new system.

How we interpret the empirical data attesting to the evolution of primary interests with respect to changes in ownership will also depend on how we decide to distinguish the developmental phases of transformation during the entire systemic transformation. Very significant here are the changes which take place in inherited interests due to changes in social structure as the transformation gains impetus. Of all three phases of transformation distinguished on the basis of available empirical material, the legacy of the contentious phase apparently still has a key role to play. Awareness of the interests and preferences of the socialist economic system

developed in the eighties under the powerful influence of Solidarity's idea of "self-governing Republic". If the concept of privatization appeared in this model at all, it was reduced to the idea of group employee ownership or to the postulate of factory gang participation in the utilization and management of the means of production. These means, however, still remained under the supervision of the state bureaucracy.

The strategies of reconstruction of the Polish economy adopted in conditions of acute economic crisis in 1989, and particularly the strategies of privatization, turned out to be too demanding to be widely endorsed. Workers' strong aspirations to participate in the processes of systemic transformation led to disappointment and this in turn led to the initial re-assessment of interests which had developed at an earlier stage. Only a few were able to advance to the class of owners or co-owners. At the same time considerable proportions of workers, particularly the great-industrial working class, suddenly lost their jobs and the majority of workers could no longer be sure of employment and were aware that their income would be curbed or at the best stagnant. Together these drastic structural eruptions resulted in profound transformation of inherited interests and in the emergence of completely new interests. The stream of group interests focused on gaining access to ownership and prominent positions in the newly developing socio-occupational structure is particularly pronounced here. This group of status-related and acquisitive interests stands in juxtaposition to the threatened interests of social groups confronted with the prospect of permanent social degradation. The aim of the present analysis is to trace the evolution and dynamics of interests in these two areas, i.e., to recognize the structure of acquisitive interests on the one hand and threatened interests on the other hand.

## **6. Continuity versus discontinuity in social preferences with respect to privatization in 1988-1995**

If we view the ongoing transformations in ownership in the Polish economy as a dramatic struggle over the systemic principles of the old and new social orders, then neither the ultimate shape of this new order nor its acceptance by the vast majority of Polish citizens are as yet predestined. Here is what the systemic preferences of the Polish people, maintained so persistently from 1988 to 1995, have to say on this matter.

The most radical bid as far as reconstruction of the post-socialist economy and the basic public institutions is concerned, i.e., the one which endorses the neo-liberal strategy of unlimited privatization, is accepted by the majority of Poles only with respect to two sectors: trade and state-owned farms. At the other extreme of social preferences we have the institutions of residential health care, i.e., the hospitals. Any mention of privatization of hospitals in any form whatever evokes steadfast protest



in the majority of people. The most desirable model of ownership in such economically strategic areas as factories and banks is the mixed model. The absolute majority of respondents would be willing to agree to only partial privatization in these areas. At the same time, however, one in every three statistical Poles is firmly against any form of participation of private capital in the transformation of the ownership status of farms and banks and only one Pole in ten approves of unlimited privatization of these sectors of the national economy.

Table 8. Changing preferences with respect to privatisation; research findings for 1988, 1990 and 1995 (in percents)\*

Branches of the economy, institutions	Year	Expressed preferences with respect to privatisation		
		Unlimited acceptance	Limited acceptance	Rejection
Large industrial plants	1988	11.4	25.6	51.3
	1990	12.5	48.9	23.3
	1995	10.0	51.4	32.9
Banks	1988	10.6	24.3	44.4
	1990	22.0	41.4	18.9
	1995	12.4	45.8	32.0
Trade	1988	--	--	--
	1990	49.4	35.7	7.3
	1995	46.8	32.2	9.8
Hospitals	1988	11.4	25.8	51.3
	1990	10.4	32.1	47.6
	1995	10.6	37.0	48.0
State-owned farms	1988	--	--	--
	1990	44.7	27.1	12.4
	1995	42.4	31.9	17.9
Table 1 cont.				
Public transport	1988	16.4	33.2	35.9
	1990	21.4	34.4	28.2
	1995	24.4	39.4	29.9

\* "Can't say" responses omitted.

The balance of power between the advocates of radical or moderate strategies of change in the ownership structure on the one hand and the opponents of all privatization is not static, however. Its dynamics (cf. Table 8) can be seen most clearly among those who endorse limited privatization on the one hand and those who vehemently oppose privatization on the other hand. Strong rejection is expressed mainly with respect to privatization of industry and banking. Between 1988 and 1995 the number of adherents of limited privatization in these sectors almost doubled whereas an opposite, albeit irregular, tendency shows up in the diminishing forces (51% to 33%) of opponents of privatization in the basic sectors of the economy. However, the optimism emanating from these results is less convincing when we look at the next, five-year period, i.e., 1990-1995. Then we shall see that the slight increment in the number of adherents of privatization is accompanied by a radical increase in the number of respondents rejecting any structural change whatsoever.

So, as we see, the social dynamics of systemic transformation, analyzed in the context of approval of privatization processes, are very heterogeneous and selective. The almost stable dominance of full approval or at least permission for privatization of trade and state-owned farms is countered by quite an opposite tendency with respect to changes in the ownership status of banks, and particularly large industrial plants. These are social institutions towards which (just as towards hospitals) acceptance of uncurbed penetration of private ownership has invariably been at the lowest possible level over the entire seven-year period of transformation. At the same time a spectacular increase in acceptance of partial privatization of these institutions was found between 1988 and 1990.

Two tendencies are particularly noteworthy in this area of preference. First, the drop in acceptance of radical changes in 1990-1995 involved only those sectors which play a decisive role in the process of systemic transformation. Second, the decreasing endorsement of privatization is accompanied by a stronger increment in the level of disapproval of all attempts at ownership reconstruction in this area. The joint outcome of these two tendencies is manifested in the fact that the more moderate orientation, i.e., the endorsement of the speeding up of limited privatization, dominates in the structure of preferences whereas only a minority of respondents approve of radical solutions. In other words, the majority of Poles, who are in the process of correcting their ideas concerning socialism and capitalism, formed prior to the 1989 political breakthrough, are apparently leaning towards the golden middle situated between models of privatization based on fully liberal principles on the one hand and defence of the *status quo* of post-socialist state ownership on the other hand. The fact that almost three times more respondents oppose any form of privatization in Polish industry and banking than endorse a fully liberal solution in this area reinforces the significance of the central orientation in which lies the greatest hope for further ownership changes in the Polish economy.

Table 9. The correlates of preferences with respect to privatisation of large industrial plants and banks in 1995 (Pearson's r, N=2000)

Socio-demographic descriptors, material status and political orientation of respondent	Full approval (1) Partial approval (2) <u>Rejection (3)</u>	
	large plants	banks
Date of birth	-.115	-.112
Education (1=incomplete primary 8=higher)	-.194	-.167
Sex (0=F, 1=M)	-.123	-.130
Position (0=non-managerial, 1=managerial)	-.085	-.071
Assessment of household material status (1=very good, 5=very bad)	.093	.118
Assessment of household material status in last 5-6 years (1=definitely deteriorated, 5=definitely improved)	-.062	-.036
Does R. run his own business (0=no, 1=yes)	-.083	-.082
Changes in the country mean more opportunities (1), more threats (2) for R	.137	.139
Participation in strikes (0=no, 1=yes)	.066	.064
Participation in street demonstrations (0=no, 1=yes)	-.117	-.019
Are differences in income in Poland too large (1), too small (3)	.075	.046
For people like R. life in Poland is better today (1), will be better in five years (2)	.154	.158
Table 2 cont.		
Should the government withdraw some of its command over the economy (1=defin.yes, 4=defin.no)	.163	-.185
Political self-definition (1=defin. leftist, 4=defin. rightist)	.207	.169
Is Polish independence at risk (1=yes, 4=no)	.190	.133
Support for integration with NATO (1=defin.yes, 5=defin.no)	.262	.190
Support for integration with EU (1=defin.yes, 5=defin.no)	.246	.226
Support for further influx of German capital (1=defin.yes, 5=defin.no)	.211	.197
The state should curtail the income of the highest income groups (1=defin.yes, 4=defin.no)	-.062	-.042
The state should insure highly diversified wages depending on qualifications and output	.198	.152
The state should support employee self-government in enterprise management	.184	.170

Also, it is worth keeping in mind that with the passage of time ownership transformations according to the model of partial privatization are gaining acceptance with respect to public services, including hospital care, as well.

Will these dynamic tendencies in social preferences with respect to the new, emerging ownership structure in the Polish national economy be stable or should we expect a change of orientation, i.e., a significant increase in approval of unlimited privatization? Closer insight into the correlation's between the analyzed ownership preferences for 1995 suggests rather unequivocally that these preferences are evolving. This evolution seems to be going in the direction of gradual increase in acceptance of the ongoing changes in the structure of ownership. A look at the correlational analysis (Table 9) will help us indicate the sources of possible reorientation of this presently rather unfavorable balance of power between the adherents and the opponents of privatization. The most certain source of potential change, albeit one whose effects will only be noticeable in more long-term perspective, is the fact that the enthusiasts of the development of private ownership, uncurbed by administrative limitations, are usually young people with better than average education. The more permanent this interaction and the stronger the current rush to college in the young generation, the more significant its effects will be.

The second source of potential increase of orientations conducive in one way or another to the development of privatization lies in the fact that privatization is supported by such structural changes as sudden social upward mobility, associated with shifting to the business or managerial class, and with positive ratings of changes in the material status of the respondent and his/her household. We are referring here both to ratings of the current state of things and ratings of the near past and the anticipated nearest future. We know that the educational boom has helped to promote acceptance of private ownership. Similarly, the effectiveness of the remaining structural factors should increase in proportion to the increase in the national income, assuming that it will be reasonably justly distributed. Such policy can count on significant (though not dramatic) acceptance from the advocates of privatisation.

The prospect of positive reorientation of the social acceptance of further restructuring of the Polish economy according to the rules of private ownership is finally receiving clear support in the form of accompanying political views. Those who approve of privatization most strongly also usually approve of Polish integration with NATO and the European Union. Those respondents are also the most determined advocates of such state policies which encourage further investment of German capital in Poland. And although this may seem shocking and paradoxical, it is not the Poles who define themselves as right-wingers but those who identify with the left side of the political scene who act as the ideological promoters of radical privatisation. This seeming paradox will resolve itself, however, when we see that the leftist orientation we are dealing with here is rather

specific: it correlates not only with such biographical markers as a left-wing background (measured in terms of membership of both the respondent and the respondent's father in the Polish communist party) or strong endorsement of the policy of support for employee self-governments but also with young age, above-average education and above-average participation in the power structure, measured in terms of holding a managerial position.

## **7. The evolution of acquisitive and threatened interests in the context of approval vs. disapproval of privatisation**

In accordance with the adopted methodology, we shall identify the potential actors and promoters of the transformation of the ownership structure by referring to the interactions between the systemic attitudes and preferences of our respondents on the one hand and the structural context of the situation of the carriers of these attitudes and preferences (which changes as the transformation proceeds) on the other hand. From 1988 on, two principles of social grouping have invariably proven to be the most sensitive detectors of the dynamics of preferences with respect to privatisation. First we have the divisions between and within the basic socio-economic categories; here the criterion of variance according to differences in interests is closeness to vs. "distance" from the power structure, i.e., whether or not the respondents within one common socio-occupational category hold managerial positions or have no access to such positions. Second we have divisions within the different socio-occupational categories, manifested in terms of membership in one or other of two competing trade unions, i.e., Solidarity and Branch unions. In this case the decisive differential factor is the difference in values and ideological orientation which causes these values and orientations to generate different attitudes toward changes in the ownership structure, often in opposition to, or discord with, the alleged interests of the people controlled by these values.

From 1990 on, and in 1995 in particular, a third division showed up. Differences in the support or rejection of privatization began to show up more and more clearly, depending on how respondents assessed the changes in their families and their material situation. Despite outward similarities, the social groups distinguished this way do not coincide with the so-called objective division into "winners" and "losers" in the process of transformation. Although each of these methods of social grouping highlights a different pattern of interests and values, enmeshed in ongoing changes in the structure of privatization, they may be analyzed together as an expression of social dynamics and the mutual friction of "acquisitive" and "threatened" interests.

Table 10. Changes in preferences with respect to privatization of industry and socio-occupational position in 1988, 1990 and 1995 (percents)

Socio-occupational position	Year	N	Unlimited privatization	Limited privatization	Against privatization
Specialists and managers	1988	160	8.8	41.3	43.8
	1990	143	18.9	58.7	19.6
	1995	85	23.5	58.8	15.3
Remaining white-collar	1988	328	11.5	32.9	48.2
	1990	324	14.5	54.3	20.4
	1995	316	11.1	66.8	18.0
Blue/white-collar	1988	142	13.4	28.9	38.0
	1990	129	10.1	49.6	26.4
	1995	119	5.9	47.9	37.0
Skilled workers	1988	517	15.5	36.4	40.0
	1990	424	13.2	52.8	25.2
	1995	345	8.1	52.2	36.2
Skilled workers	1988	175	11.4	31.4	42.3
	1990	199	11.1	50.8	22.1
	1995	146	6.2	42.5	43.8
Farmers	1988	225	11.0	27.5	34.1
	1990	341	7.0	35.8	26.7
	1995	165	5.5	43.6	43.0
Owners other than farmers	1988	69	27.5	42.0	20.3
	1990	58	24.1	48.0	20.7
	1995	142	16.9	56.3	24.6
Unemployed	1988	--	--	--	--
	1990	87	14.9	47.1	24.1
	1995	205	8.8	48.8	37.6

The two distinctions traditionally made in the sociology of social structure, i.e., workers/intelligentsia and owners-entrepreneurs/farmers is still very useful when we wish to analyze preferences with respect to privatization (cf. Table 10). However, between 1988 and 1995 the evolution of these preferences in the two basic categories proceeds according to different patterns. What we see is a truly dramatic widening of the gap between the interests of the main heroes of the Solidarity struggle, i.e., skilled workers and the "proletarianised intelligentsia". With their drastically diminishing support for unlimited privatization, workers are now situated

next to the most reactionary category, i.e., the peasants, and the unemployed whereas the educated intelligentsia, though initially unfavourably disposed toward privatisation, is now one of the most radical supporters of change in ownership structure. In this context it is truly surprising that, despite popular expectations to the contrary, entrepreneurs in non-agricultural sectors of production and services, i.e., those who are supposed to provide the basic structure on which the "new middle class" is to develop, clearly manifest not only systematically decreasing support for privatization but even soaring disapproval.

Table 11. Changes in preferences with respect to privatization of the industrial sector depending on socio-occupational position and function in 1988-1995 (percents)

Socio-occupational position	Function	Unlimited privatization			Limited privatization			Against privatization		
		1988	1990	1995	1988	1990	1995	1988	1990	1995
Specialist	NM <sup>x</sup>	11,0	22,0	20,0	48,0	56,0	60,0	34,0	18,0	16,0
	M	4,0	12,5	29,5	28,0	66,0	56,0	64,0	21,5	15,0
Technician	NM	9,0	16,0	10,5	37,0	62,0	67,0	46,0	15,0	18,0
	M	8,0	15,5	14,5	32,5	53,0	65,0	52,0	24,0	19,0
Office worker	NM	16,0	14,5	9,0	27,0	55,5		42,0	16,0	
	M	12,5	0,0		62,5	33,0		25,0	33,0	
White/blue collar	NM	13,5	13,0	5,0	28,0	48,0	48,5	37,5	25,5	38,0
	M	13,5	4,0	8,0	30,0	42,0	46,5	40,5	34,5	33,5
Skilled workers	NM	14,5	13,0	8,0	37,0	52,5	52,5	40,0	26,0	36,5
	M	25,0	19,0	13,0	27,0	44,0	52,0	39,0	22,0	35,0

<sup>x</sup> NM - nonmanagerial      M - managerial

This ever-deepening rift between the interests of the workers and the intelligentsia, which showed up so convincingly in the dynamics of preferences with respect to the privatization of industry, gains in clarity when we look at it in the context of differences in these two social categories with respect to their access to managerial positions (cf. Table 11). In 1988 workers as a whole, and especially those workers who had some power, i.e., foremen and gangsmen, endorsed the idea of unlimited privatization in the industrial sector many times more frequently than specialists with managerial positions and they also opposed the idea much less whereas in 1990-1995 both groups reversed their orientations towards privatisation. By 1995 it was mainly managers with higher education who acted as promoters of unlimited restructuring of the ownership system whereas as far as foremen and gangsmen as well as office-workers and white/blue-collar workers are concerned, liberal preference previously so openly voiced, now began to erode systematically and approach the average level for blue-collar workers in general and white collar workers with secondary education.

These contradictory evolutionary tendencies in the preferences of blue-collar workers and related groups on the one hand and the intelligentsia and managers on the other hand seem to express changes in the perception of privatization depending on whether the interests of one and other group are believed to be supported or threatened. In 1988, i.e., at the beginning of the political breakthrough, two-thirds of the educated managers were opposed to any form of privatization (probably due to their fear of losing their high positions and the risk of social degradation) whereas one qualified workman in seven and one foreman or gangsmen in four in this category approved of unlimited privatization of socialist industry (probably because the hope of advancement via participation in the administration of state ownership and the ensuing development of acquisitive interests).

It seems that this switch of direction in the evolution of preferences with respect to privatization between workmen and managers in 1990, and especially in 1995, depends directly on how one and other group assessed the ongoing changes in ownership structure: as the expression of unsatisfied hopes of a better position in the newly developing social structure or as an expression of the receding threat of social degradation.



Table 12. Preferences with respect to privatisation of large factories as related to socio-occupational position and perceived change in material situation, own and household, over last 5-6 years in 1995 (percents)

Socio-occupational position	Perceived change in household situation in 5-6 years	N	Complete	Limited	Against	Cramer's coefficient
Enterpresents	-	45	11.0	66.5	20.0	.136
	=	34	23.5	47.0	29.5	
	+	61	18.0	52.5	26.0	
Managers and Specialists	-	27	22.0	40.6	33.5	.289
	=	18	22.0	78.0	--	
	+	39	25.5	64.0	10.5	
Remaining White-collared	-	150	8.0	64.5	22.5	.113
	=	68	14.5	64.5	14.5	
	+	90	14.5	70.0	13.5	
Blue/white collared	-	62	3.0	43.5	42.0	.162
	=	32	12.5	50.0	34.5	
	+	23	4.5	52.0	30.5	
Qualified workmen	-	188	10.5	45.5	40.0	.132
	=	89	3.5	55.0	37.0	
	+	65	6.0	66.0	26.0	
Table 5 cont.						
Unqualified workmen	-	86	6.0	43.0	46.5	.228
	=	36	5.5	44.5	47.0	
	+	22	4.5	41.0	27.0	
Farmers	-	105	6.5	45.0	43.0	.109
	=	43	2.3	46.0	42.5	
	+	15	6.5	26.5	53.0	
Unemployed	-	136	8.5	45.0	40.5	.101
	=	30	6.5	60.0	30.0	
	+	37	11.0	57.0	29.5	

- deterioration / = no change / + improvement

We find the answer to this question in the relationships between preferences with respect to privatization on the one hand and the respondent's assessment of his own material situation and that of his household (cf. Table 12). Opposition against privatization is most successfully softened when current material conditions of life are perceived as better than 5-6 years earlier. This pattern is found not only for specialists, managers and qualified workmen but also for the remaining groups of hired workers including those who were unemployed in 1995. On the other hand this relationship is reversed for entrepreneurs and particularly for farmers. The established pattern apparently has different determinants in each particular case. The tendency to disapprove of any form of privatization whatsoever is strongest in farmers, probably because the first to be hit by the reductions in employment which accompany privatization were the peasants-cum-workmen, who live in the villages. On the other hand, private entrepreneurs in the non-agricultural sector may view privatized enterprises as rivals with whom it will not be so easy to compete as it was in the previous "deficit economy".

Other than the differences in preferences with respect to privatization, which showed up when the respondents were grouped according to the degree of realization of prospective status interests or current existential interests, the differences in preference depending on trade-union affiliation indicate that endorsement of one or other privatization strategy is determined not only by interests but also by systemically contradictory value systems, expressed in distinct ideological and political predilections and preferences.

In all the basic socio-economic groups, and particularly among blue-collar workers, members of "Solidarity" - with their greater support and weaker rejection of privatization - differed significantly from the members of Branch unions (the federation of trade unions of the different branches of industry). Later fluctuations in the declared acceptance of privatization in one and other group are clearly related to the changed political orientation of the ruling coalition. In 1990 "Solidarity" members (except specialists and managers) show a distinct increase in support for the privatization program whereas changes in the preferences of Branch unions, mainly unskilled workers, go in the opposite direction. Differences between members of the two trade unions adhere to an analogous pattern in 1995. This time, once again (primarily the blue-collar workers), with the consistent exception of the educated, pro-reform intelligentsia, Solidarity members drastically withdrew their support for privatization controlled by the leftist governing then coalition whereas the Branch unionists manifested increased support and much weaker disapproval (compared with their colleagues from Solidarity) of unlimited privatization.

## **8. The attractiveness of patterns of private and state ownership in the economy: differences and changes in preferences in 1990-1995**

Although privatization of post-socialist property is the key theme of social and political dispute and controversy, it by no means exhausts the sociological approach to the issue of transformation in the structure of ownership in the economy. Social preferences with respect to currently functioning patterns of economy based on the rules of private, group or state ownership, are equally important. The research findings for 1990 and 1995 presented in Tables 7 and 8 provide us with the first opportunity to get a glimpse of the differences and dynamics of these preferences in basic employee categories.

These data were obtained by asking respondents the following question: "If it were entirely up to you, where would you prefer to work: (a) in a private firm, (b) in a state-owned firm, (c) in a firm of your own?"

The overall outcome of this "voting session" (cf. Table 13) revealed two dominant preferences: the first choice is the private enterprise, where the respondent himself is the owner, the second choice (just as frequent) is the state as the preferred owner of the firm in which the respondent works as a hired worker. Least popular is the third option, i.e., work for a private employer, at home or abroad. This pattern of desirable professional career is clearly the least attractive of all. If we assume that these preferences are based not on fantasies but on real experience with the pros and cons of rival systems of ownership, then the differences and developmental trends in these preferences ought to be carefully observed by the transformation strategists.

One of the key problems here is the very low and more or less decreasing attractiveness of hired work in a private firm in 1990-1995. Specialists with higher education, including managers in particular but also foremen and gangsmen, normally classified as qualified workmen, are the only positive exception to this pattern. In this context we are struck by the increased attractiveness of work in the public sector. In the five year period we are analyzing here, this increase can be observed in every social category except managers with higher education. In the group of specialists with secondary education, blue/white-collar workers and unqualified workmen this increase is a real leap. However, this tendency in the evolution of employee preferences, so unfavourable for the future of the private sector, is balanced by the relatively stable level of aspirations concerning having a business of one's own.

Table 13. Systemic preferences concerning desired place of work as related to respondent's socio-occupational position and managerial function in 1995 (percents)

Socio-occupational position	Function	If it were entirely up to you where would you prefer to work?							
		private firm		state firm		my own firm		abroad	
		1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995
Specialist	NM	6.0	10.0	24.0	26.0	51.0	38.0	6.0	2.0
	M	11.0	20.5	23.5	17.5	51.0	41.0	5.5	6.0
Remaining office	NM	9.5	7.5	24.0	42.5	36.5	35.0	10.5	4.0
	M	8.5	8.0	31.0	30.5	40.0	43.5	8.5	9.5
Blue/white collar	NM	10.0	7.5	20.5	39.0	28.5	42.0	11.0	4.0
	M	4.0	8.5	40.0	41.5	44.0	41.5	4.0	0.0
Qualified workmen	NM	14.5	7.5	29.0	42.0	25.0	32.0	18.0	17.0
	M	9.5	17.5	32.5	35.0	29.0	30.5	13.0	8.5
Unqualified workmen	NM	15.5	7.0	40.0	60.0	38.0	18.0	9.5	9.0

NM - nonmanagerial M - managerial

The percents do not add up to 100 because "other" and "don't know" responses have been omitted.

With the exception of unqualified workmen and specialists (who are gradually losing interest in this type of career, probably for different reasons), the remaining socio-occupational groups dream of working "in their own business" and this dream is invariably high and tending to intensify. A clear sign of this is the fact that thirty to forty odd percent of Poles in the work force persistently maintain these ambitious aspirations.

Can these strong tendencies (a) to accept private ownership (but mainly in the form of a business of one's own) and at the same time (b) to reject hired employment under a "private employer" and strongly endorse the state as employer, be interpreted in terms of both acquisitive interests (albeit ones which have still not been satisfied) and group interests for which the previous privatization processes pose a real threat, not only to current existential interests but also to prospective status-related interests? I think this may be possible. If so, then the distinction made above probably results not only from such structural sources as: higher education and, in particular, managerial position. Cultural-ideological variables also seem to be intervening here. The differences in preferences depending on trade-union

affiliation show that this is actually the case. Attractiveness of one or other system of ownership still depends significantly on trade-union affiliation: to Solidarity or Branch unions or neither. The state owner is much more attractive for members of Branch unions than members of Solidarity, especially if the respondent is a specialist with higher education but also if he belongs to the class of remaining white-collar workers or unqualified workmen. In all categories of respondents except blue/white-collar workers, affiliation with Branch unions, and probably organizational ties with the present social-democratic party as well, has left its mark in the form of much weaker desire to have a business of one's own than in respondents affiliated with Solidarity or not affiliated with any trade union at all.

Table 14. Systemic preferences with respect to present place of work depending on whether or not it is privatized and whether or not Respondent holds a managerial position there, 1995 (percents)

Place of work	Position	N	Preferred type of ownership		
			state	employee (co-op.)	private
Other than private sector	Manag.	84	47.6	42.9	9.5
	Nonmanag.	438	57.8	38.1	4.1
Private sector	Manag.	26	7.7	46.2	46.2
	Nonmanag.	196	27.0	45.4	27.6

The differences in systemic preferences are even more pronounced when we relate them directly to the current and desired status of the enterprise in which the respondent is employed and when we add the option of free choice of the ownership structure of the enterprise to the list of systemic options. Material for this analysis may be gleaned from the responses to the following question: "What do you think, what form of ownership would be best in your firm?" Respondents could choose from a list of seven options. We have selected three basic options for further analysis: state (treasury) ownership, employee (co-operative) ownership and private ownership.

The systemic preferences with respect to the firm in which the respondent works (cf. Table 14) seem to confirm the popular sociological cliché that "what you think depends on where you sit". However, the empirical findings suggest that this principle is not symmetrical: it is fully supported for respondents employed in the unprivatised sector whereas it refers much less strongly and more inconsistently to

those employed in the private sector. The former category of respondents (the rank-and file rather than the managers) are largely in favor of the state ownership model whereas respondents from the other side of the barricade embrace the model of private ownership of enterprises. This option is indicated by one in every two managers working in such enterprises and one in four rank-and-file employees. Both types of employees, however, i.e., "privatized" and "state-owned", share the view that the best form of ownership for their enterprise is employee ownership; this option was selected by almost equal numbers of representatives of both categories. It is noteworthy that this bias towards employee ownership, i.e., group ownership, is slightly stronger among those working in the private sector (both managers and rank-and-file workers) than among those employed in the public sector.

The differences in preferences presented above suggest that both "threatened" employee interests, i.e., those which will block any potential change in form of ownership, and acquisitive interests, i.e., those which are open to structural change, can be found in both sectors, public and private, albeit in different degrees. In other words, not only the negligible attractiveness of the private enterprise model among employees of the public sector but also weak approval of this model among employees in managerial positions working in private firms is a serious problem: one in four managers employed in the private sector say that a state-owned enterprise is still their most desirable place of work.

Trade-union affiliations throw additional light on the stability and prospects of change in the pattern of dominant interests and preferences with respect to potential paths and opportunities for further restructuring of the economy. Traditionally, Branch unions are the bastion of state ownership and opposition towards private ownership. However, this is true mainly of those unionists who are specialists with higher education or white collar workers. As far as blue-collar workers are concerned, both trade unions locate their interests in the model of employee ownership and definitely reject the private ownership. Despite their inherited mutual aversion, both unions (and particularly their most numerous segment, i.e., blue-collar workers), articulate the same shared sense of threat concerning the prospect of privatization. The largest number of advocates of further privatization and the fewest opponents of such change are to be found among those workers who do not belong to any trade union.

## Conclusion

The presented analyses show that the Poles attitudes and preferences with respect to systemic transformation in the national economy differ greatly and are evolving with the progression of systemic transformation. However, the direction in which this evolution is going is by no means clear: true, the dominant theme is acceptance and support of the ongoing changes in ownership structure but we are also observing significant, persistent and increasing symptoms of rejection or intensely emotionally charged disapproval. The main target of these contradictory opinions are the programs of restructuring of the key branches of state-owned industry and banking, according to the capital privatization principle. Equally discrepant are the preferences with respect to most desirable forms of ownership, aspirations to become a businessman, and the status of the enterprise in which respondents would be most willing to work as hired employees.

The nature of these differences in attitude and preference shows that they clearly depend on the respondent's economic situation (household income and its assessment) and on the respondent's position in the process of transformation, both of which differ depending on the phase of transformation. Interpretation of these relationships in terms of group interests entitles us to distinguish two types of interests: first the interests of those social groups which perceive the changes in ownership structure mainly in terms of the risks which these changes pose for previously achieved standards of living and social positions and second the interests of those groups which have successfully made the most of the opportunities and possibilities which have been spread before them by the transition to market economy, i.e., clear-cut or even spectacular improvement of income and social position.

Assuming that the situation where "structural and subjective gains clearly outweigh structural and subjective losses" is the measure of success in the ongoing post-socialist transformation, we may say, in light of our findings, that we still have a long way to go before we achieve this measure of success. But despite and over and above the fact that in the meantime rejection of privatization is weakening only in the group of white-collar workers whereas it is growing in the basic social classes, we have reason to predict that the present level of social consciousness will not be able to hold back the process of ownership transformation. On the other hand, pressure from those social groups which perceive themselves most acutely as "structural losers" but at the same time are managing to realize their interests successfully, may introduce more or less significant modifications to the strategy of privatization and restructuring of the economy.

The crucial argument in favour of this prognosis is that the between-group and meta-group social bonds which were so characteristic in the eighties no longer exist. One of the spectacular manifestations of this truth is the disintegration of the common

interests of the workers and the intelligentsia and the previous readiness of these two groups to co-operate as partners. New social divisions brought about by the transformation processes, and mainly by opening the gates wide open to economy based on private ownership, are leading to the crystallization of new interests and new social bonds. These are now forming within classes and large social-occupational groups rather than over and above these classes and groups.

Therefore, even though workmen are much less likely than entrepreneurs to view their material situation as improved, they are equally vehemently opposed to privatization of large state-owned firms, albeit probably for different reasons. Holding a managerial position has a similarly disintegrating effect (and a much stronger one than before) on intra-class/group cohesion of interests and preferences with respect to transformation of the ownership structure. This probably explains why specialists and managers so numerous switched fields to become radical enthusiasts of privatization in 1990-1995.

Blue-collar workers in large industrial plants are one of the basic social groups manifesting deep splitting and ambivalence when asked to choose between state-ownership and one or other model of privatization. This group, which once made up almost one half of the entire work force, is now considerably reduced in size and scattered between enterprises differing in ownership status but at the same time it is supremely organized into trade unions. Blue-collar workers today are the only influential social class which has not yet come to terms with the status which the newly-emerging economic system has to offer. What distinguishes this class from the remaining ones is: (a) strong and still rising aspirations to "start a business of their own" along with even stronger and even more rapidly increasing rejection of the ongoing privatization of state owned firms; (b) aversion towards hired work in private firms and consistent clinging to the public employer whose only acceptable alternative is the model of employee-owned enterprise or some other form of ownership with significant employee participation.

Such ambivalent aspirations can be expected to stimulate enough social and political problems for at least several more governing coalitions.





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